

HANDBOOK

Printable [Handbook](#) (pdf file)

Postdoc Categories

A **postdoctoral scholar** is one who has received his terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D./M.D.) and is pursuing further training. The postdoctoral scholar position is a short term training position, geared towards career, typically in academics, private industries, law firms or government. The initial appointment is for one year, with possible reappointments for two additional one-year terms. A postdoctoral scholar for the first three to four years of appointment is designated as a **postdoctoral research associate**. The counting for the completion of 4 years begins from the date a postdoc joins UNMC. A postdoctoral scholar under the F or T-type training grants is designated as a **postdoctoral research fellow**. The extension of the postdoctoral scholar appointment beyond four years requires the approval of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs prior to the effective date of the reappointment. A written justification from the mentor for the extension is required. The purpose of the time-bound appointment is to protect the postdoctoral scholar from an indefinite length of stay in a training position and ensure transition into his/her career in a particular area of choice.

Research Associate (RA)

Focus: Research Training

Source of funding: Usually research grant, start-up or other departmental funds.

Education/Degree: PhD student in the process of completing/defending their dissertation.

Appointment Type: Special Appointment - Full Time Only (100% FTE) – Regular Employee

Position Type: Academic (A1) – Regular Other Academic Salary

Duration: Short term: one year or less. Second year requires prior approval from the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA).

Minimum salary: The same as postdoctoral research associate.

Benefits: Regular Managerial Professional benefits including retirement plans.

Postdoctoral Research Associate (PRA)

Focus: Postdoctoral Scholar: Research Training

Source of funding: Federal grants, State grants or Private Funds (e.g., foundation funds)

Education/Degree: Doctorate required.

Appointment Type: Special Appointment - Full Time Only (100% FTE)

Position Type: Academic (A1) - Regular Other Academic Salary

Duration: Up to four years. Initial appointment for one year, appointment may be renewed on a year-to-year basis for an additional three years. Second year renewal **requires** completion of the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RCR) Training and the Independent Development Plan (IDP). Annual evaluations with mentor are required for all reappointments. . Extension beyond four years requires prior approval from the VCAA.

Minimum salary: The base salary will be set at the NRSA rate, adjusted by the cost of living index for Omaha, NE, when compared to the national average.

Benefits: Postdoctoral Research Associates (PRA) are eligible to enroll in the UNMC medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and LTD. Currently not eligible to participate in the University of Nebraska Basic Retirement 401(a) Plan, eligible for Supplemental Retirement 403(b) Plan. Vacation leave: fifteen days per year. Vacation time must be used during appointment period, may not be carried over or paid out (not eligible for vacation accrual). Sick leave: same as Managerial Professional.

Postdoctoral Fellow (PF)

Focus: Postdoctoral Scholar: Research Training

Source of funding: NIH National Research Service Award or F -type or T-type training grants.

Education/Degree: Doctorate required

Appointment Type: Not an Employee of UNMC but paid via UNMC. Full time commitment (100% FTE).

Position Type: Academic (A1) - Regular Other Academic Salary

Duration: 1 year with annual renewal up to 3 years. Appointment may be renewed on a year-to-year basis for an additional one/two years. Second year renewal **requires** completion of the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RCR) Training and the Independent Development Plan (IDP). Annual evaluations with mentor are required for all reappointments. Extension beyond 3 years requires prior approval from the VCAA.

Minimum salary: The base salary will be set at the NRSA rate, adjusted by the cost of living index for Omaha, NE, when compared to the national average.

Benefits: Postdoctoral Fellows (PF) are eligible to enroll in health insurance, life insurance and LTD programs. NOT eligible to participate in the University of Nebraska Basic Retirement 401(a) Plan, eligible for the Supplemental Retirement 403(b) Plan. Vacation leave: fifteen days per year. Vacation time must be used during appointment period, may not be carried over or paid out (not eligible for vacation accrual). Sick Leave: 15 days of paid sick leave per year.

Senior Research Associate (SRA)

The Senior Research Associate (SRA) position is eliminated. Current research associates, senior research associates, and visiting research associates are transitioning to either a faculty appointment or to managerial professional. Visiting research associates may complete their term; however, if reappointment is necessary, see visiting research assistant.

Expectations

A postdoctoral scholar is expected to participate in full-time advanced research training under the supervision and direction of a faculty mentor in his/her research program, supported by a Fellowship/Traineeship or equivalent support. The training involves participation in all relevant research and academic activities related to preparation for a scientific career. These include reading and researching literature, manuscript preparation of research findings, attendance and presentations at seminars and meetings, attendance at training related activities (e.g., workshops for grant writing/scientific presentation), and a possible training in teaching related activities by mutual agreement between the postdoctoral scholars and mentors.. A good communication and sharing of similar expectations between mentor and the scholars cannot be overemphasized for meeting these objectives.

Compact

The Compact between Postdoctoral Scholars and Faculty Mentors is a document developed at UNMC to initiate discussion about the Postdoctoral Scholar-Mentor relationships and obligations for a high quality postdoctoral training experience.

Obligations of a postdoctoral scholar

1. Develops a mutually defined research project (s) with the mentor that includes well-defined goals and timeliness.
2. Participates actively and conscientiously in a research project(s) outlined in discussion with the faculty mentor.
3. Seeks regular feedback on his/hers performance and participates in a formal evaluation by the mentor at least annually (**Annual Review Form**)
4. Develop an **individual development plan** with the mentor.

5. Exhibits good laboratory practice such as careful maintenance of research record and compliance with guidelines for biosafety and those involving animals and human subjects in research.
6. Complies with UNMC policies and guidelines on scientific conduct, intellectual property and laboratory safety.
7. Maintains collegial conduct towards mentor and co-workers.
8. Attends Orientation and mandatory Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) workshop in the freshman year. Attends career development workshops/seminars (i.e., grant-writing workshops, placement workshops and workshops to improve scientific writing and presentation).

Obligations of a Faculty Mentor

1. Ensures that a mutually agreed upon set of expectations and goals are in place at the outset of the postdoctoral training.
2. Provides adequate facilities, resources and guidance to achieve the agreed upon goals of the project.
3. Ensures timely submission of the scholar's research for publication/presentation and that he/she gets appropriate credit
4. Provides adequate guidance and mentoring in manuscript preparation and presentation of scientific information.
5. Reviews scholar's performance annually, in terms of research endeavor and career development. A copy of the evaluation, countersigned by the scholar, should be made available to the scholar and postdoctoral education office.
6. Ensures that a scholar attends Orientation and mandatory Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) workshop in the freshman year.
7. Encourages scholars to attend career development workshops/seminars (i.e., grant-writing workshops, placement workshops and workshops to improve scientific writing and presentation).

Salary

UNMC has a minimum salary policy for freshman postdoctoral scholars, which is determined every year based on the NRSA recommended salary and national survey of cost of living in Omaha. Please contact our office for the minimum salary for the current year.

Health and Life Insurance Benefits

Postdoctoral research associates/fellows and research associates working at a rate of 0.50 or greater are eligible to enroll in the health insurance and life insurance programs.

Long Term Disability

Postdoctoral research associates or fellow and research associate working at a rate of 0.50 or greater are eligible to enroll for long term disability coverage through UNMC.

Retirement Program

Postdoctoral research associates and postdoctoral fellows are NOT eligible to participate in the University of Nebraska Basic Retirement program 401(a), however they are eligible for the Supplemental Retirement Account 403(b) Plan. All regular "other academic" employees (research associate) who have met the preliminary age, service and employment status requirements or have any of these unfilled requirements waived by the Board and are working at a rate of 0.50 FTE or greater are eligible to participate in the Current Service Retirement Benefits programs of the University of Nebraska. The standard Policies and Procedures of the University of Nebraska Medical Center shall apply.

Vacation

Fifteen days per year. Vacation time must be used during appointment period. No carry forward or pay out will be permitted. Individuals must be so advised in writing at the time the position offer is made.

Holidays and Holiday Pay

Postdoctoral research associates or fellows receive the traditional and floating holidays off with pay. No carry forward or pay out will be permitted.

Sick Leave

Postdoctoral research fellow is entitled to 15 days of paid sick leave per year. Postdoctoral research associate is eligible for sick leave based on the number of years of continuous appointment. One to two years, 96 hours are earned. Over two years, 1040 hours are earned. Visit the [Human Resources](#) web site for further information.

Parental or maternity Leave

Postdoctoral research fellows are entitled to 30 days of parental leave per year for the adoption or birth of a child. NIH must approve parental leave for individual fellowships.

Unpaid Leave

Postdoctoral research fellows can request a leave of absence from NIH in advance. Under Individual fellowships, the award will be revised and extended by the number of months of leave requested. Under trainee programs, their appointments are terminated and upon return are re-appointed.

Employee and Dependent Scholarship Program

Educational benefits for the postdoctoral research associate or fellow are available for the employee (postdoc), dependent or spouse. This applies only to academic credit courses being offered at any unit of the University of Nebraska. These courses can be taken for credit or audit.

[Terms of the program.](#)

Go to the [Human Resources Policies](#) for additional information and forms.

Child Care

The **UNMC Child Development Center** was established in 1991 to meet the childcare needs of parents and grandparents who are students, staff or faculty of UNMC/NHS/UMA. Children are provided a quality program designed to meet their physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs through stimulating activities in a nurturing and accepting atmosphere. This is done with sensitive, caring staff working in partnership with parents and families. Our goal is for each child to realize his or her potential in a secure and loving environment.

[More information regarding the development center.](#)

Training & Certification

Every postdoc will have certain training requirements and policy compliance issues assigned to them for completion. To verify if you have completed all the requirements assigned to you, log on to the [Employee Self Service](#) site using your Outlook ID. When you have logged onto the site, click on "my requirements" under "training and certification." Or you can log onto [Blackboard](#) with your Outlook ID and the compliance/training issues that have been assigned to you will be listed under "courses."

Common compliance/training issues assigned to employees are below, however, you may have others assigned to you:

- [HIPAA](#)- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
- [Policy 6045](#)- Privacy, Confidentiality and Information Security Policy

Counseling Services

The Faculty/Employee Assistance Program is a confidential cost-free assessment and short term counseling service designed to assist faculty, employees and their families in addressing personal problems at home and on the job. It is available Monday through Friday, from 8AM to 5PM and the office is located in Swanson Hall, Room 4019. The contact e-mail address is srsmith1@unmc.edu and the telephone number is 559-5323.

Information for New Postdocs

Housing

The University of Nebraska Medical Center owns a variety of rental property units, which are leased to full-time students, residents and fellows of the Medical Center. All rental units are located on the UNMC campus, within walking distance to all UNMC colleges. Properties consist of one, two and three bedroom units. Maintenance and campus security are available 24 hours a day. Leases are based on the academic year. Parking is provided. All rental agreements are made through the Business Services Department, Rental Property Management. For additional information, contact [Esther Collins](#) at (402) 559-5201 or visit the [website](#).

Apartment Links

<http://www.forrent.com/>

See **Apt** Details. No Registration. Virtual Tours, Floor Plans, Photos.

<http://www.rent.com/>

Find **apartments**, roommates & moving info. Search online with Rent.com®

<http://www.apartments.com/>

Apartment Listings. View Thousands of Apartments. Take a Virtual Tour!

<http://www.apartmentguide.com/>

3 Quick Steps to Your New **Apartment** Pick Area, View Apts. & Submit Info

<http://www.move.com/>

Get Thousands of **Apartment** Rental Listings from All Over the Web.

UNMC Rental Property

Upon Arrival to Campus

Photo I.D. Card

All faculty, staff, students, house officers and volunteers are required to wear a photo ID card when on UNMC property. .The Human Resources database (SAP) is the definitive and only source of information for University employee I.D. cards. The PAF Coordinator within the employee's department must enter new postdoc information (or changes) into SAP before an I.D. card can be issued. This information will appear in the I.D. card system the **next business day**. We will take a photo and immediately issue a card if the postdoc information has been entered into SAP and appears in the I.D. card system. Otherwise, **no card will be issued**. Paper forms are not accepted. The name, division, and department

information that appear on the I.D. card cannot be changed by the Photo I.D. office. Contact the PAF Coordinator within your department if changes are necessary.

You must show a valid driver's license, government-issued photo I.D., or passport in order to obtain an I.D. card. ID cards will not be sent through campus mail. Link to the [ID website](#). (Click on UNMC employees for more information)

Microsoft Outlook ID

Request a Lotus Notes ID account to access UNMC e-mail, the Intranet, Blackboard, etc. Before requesting an account you will need to verify with your department coordinator what type of access to request, **PC Client** (you have your personal PC at work to load the software) or **Web Client** (you don't have a personal PC at work and will access Outlook, etc. from any computer).

Parking Permits

Any motor vehicle parked on the UNMC campus must have a permit. Permits can be obtained by visiting the student bookstore. Parking services is located there.

Tax Information

UNMC cannot give tax advice, but can direct you to tax resources. The Payroll Department can answer questions about pay you received. You are advised to seek a professional advisor with specific questions.

All scholars paid a salary (through the payroll system) must have on file in the UNMC Payroll Office a US Social Security Number (SSN) and an a W-4 form. Funds received by scholars, regardless of the source, are subject to US Federal and Nebraska State income tax law. The current specifications for taxation are as follows:

All support is subject to taxation. The amount of tax varies according to total income, dependency status, treaty status for international students, and individual circumstances.

Fellowship and traineeship stipends paid to US citizens and permanent residents are not subject to withholding but are considered taxable income and must be reported by the recipient.

Postdocs receive W2 forms in January and non-resident aliens will receive a 1042-S by mid to late March. These documents are sent to the mailing or home address on file with the Payroll Office. If you do not receive your W2 by January 31 or your 1042-S by March 15th, please contact the Payroll Department 559-7460.

[IRS tax forms and publications](#)

[State of Nebraska tax information](#)

International Scholars

Social Security Cards

The freshman postdoctoral scholar from other countries must apply for social security number for the payment of the salary. Please contact [International Student Office](#) and [Social Security Website](#) for help and direction.

Nebraska Driver's License

To obtain a Nebraska drivers license, go to the [DMV website](#).

All international scholars must hold an appropriate visa status during their stay at UNMC. Below are frequently asked questions regarding obtaining a visa for a postdoctoral position. If you have further questions regarding visas, please contact the [UNMC International Affairs Office](#).

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Visas:

Q. How do I start the process of getting my visa?

A. The first step in the process is for the sponsoring department to contact UNMC International Studies and Programs (IS&P) and request the appropriate visa forms.

Q. What type of visa will I get?

A. Since UNMC is the sponsoring institution, it is up to UNMC to determine which type of visa will be sponsored. Typically, post-doctoral researchers are invited on the J-1 visa.

Q. I don't want or don't think I can get a J-1 visa. Can I request an H-1B visa?

A. The decision to pursue a J-1 or an H-1B is determined by the UNMC department and IS&P. Several factors are part of this decision, including cost and time of visa preparation, length of research program and other factors.

Q. How do I make a visa appointment at my local U.S. Consulate or Embassy?

A. Please visit the [U.S. Consulate or Embassy website](#).

You will need to bring your UNMC visa document and your passport to the interview, as well as other documentation depending on which type of visa you are applying for.

Q. I have my visa. When should I plan to arrive in the U.S. and what do I do when I get there?

A. If you have a J-1 visa, you must arrive inside the U.S. within 27 days of the start date on the DS-2019 form. If your arrival will be delayed and you cannot arrive within that time frame, you must contact UNMC and request a new DS-2019 form with an adjusted beginning date. Failure to do this and arriving more than 27 days past the start date can cause serious problems with your visa and ability to remain in the U.S. on J-1 status. Many other visa questions can be answered on the [Department of State visa website](#). Once you arrive in the U.S., you should report to your sponsoring department and contact IS&P to arrange an in-processing appointment. Please bring your passport, visa, DS-2019 form (if applicable) and I-94 card to this appointment.

Q. I have other visa questions. Who can I contact?

A. UNMC International Studies and Programs is happy to answer questions regarding J-1, H-1B and other visas. Please send your questions to international@unmc.edu.

Once you have arrived at UNMC there are a number of housekeeping items that need to be taken care of. Click on the web sites below for further information and forms.

International Postdocs

- [UNMC's International Affairs Office](#)
- [National Postdoctoral Association International Information](#)
- [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
- [Visa Information](#)
- [English as a Second Language Information](#)
- [Links to US Embassies and Consulates](#)

Community Links

- [Housing](#) - Links to apartments
- [DMV](#) - Motor Vehicle Registration
- [DMV](#) - Drivers License Examining Division
- [Voter Registration](#) - Voter information and registration instructions.
- [Newcomer Information](#) - Omaha Chamber of Commerce

Grievance Procedures

Definition

Postdoctoral scholars include persons with appointments as either postdoctoral research associate or postdoctoral fellow. A postdoctoral scholar who believes that he/she has been subjected to improper or unreasonable decision by the UNMC or anyone acting officially on behalf of the UNMC, may file a grievance to obtain an independent review of the decision, and, if appropriate, corrective action. A formal grievance constitutes a written complaint made to an administrative officer of the university concerning such a decision.

Retaliation

Any act of retaliation but not limited to, interference, restraints, penalty, discrimination, coercion, or harassment, overtly or covertly, against an employee for using the grievance procedure interferes with the integrity of the grievance procedure. Accordingly, anyone who commits an act of retaliation against anyone involved in the grievance procedure subjects himself or herself to appropriate corrective actions.

Procedure

The grievance resolution procedure is a two-step process where in the first step the dispute is resolved informally with the intervention of the Director/Associate Dean for the Office of Postdoctoral Education. If the grievance is not resolved to the Grievant's satisfaction then the process of filing a formal grievance will be initiated upon the Grievant's request.

No adverse action may be taken against the postdoctoral scholar for his/her legitimate use of the grievance procedure. At any point in the grievance process, formal proceedings can be put aside in favor for voluntary mediation. For this to occur, both parties to the dispute must agree to participate in mediation.

The following are the steps in the Grievance Resolution Procedure

1. The Grievant first reports the basis for his/her dispute, written or orally, to the Director/Associate Dean of the Office of Postdoctoral Education and the Director/Associate Dean shall have a reasonable opportunity to resolve the dispute informally. He/she will inform the Responder of the complaint and give the option to both parties for mutual resolution of the complaints with the Director/Associate Dean acting as an intermediary or through the UNMC Ombudsperson's Office.

2. If Director/Associate Dean's effort to resolve the dispute informally is unsuccessful, he/she will notify the Postdoctoral Scholar of his/her right to initiate a formal grievance by providing a written statement to the Director/Associate Dean.
3. After having determined that the facts stated by the Postdoctoral Scholar may be grieved, the Director/Associate Dean shall notify the Respondent to provide response to the complaint(s) within 5 working days.
4. Following the receipt of the statement from the Respondent, the Director/Associate Dean will select a committee of 3 faculty and 2 postdoctoral scholars who have no prior knowledge of the dispute/grievance.
5. The Grievance Committee should choose a chairperson and then notify the Grievant and Respondent of the date and time of hearing, no sooner than five working days from the notification.
6. Each party can provide supporting witnesses, if any, provided a brief statement describing what information each witness has regarding the grievance has been submitted to the committee. Only those witnesses will be considered whom the committee deems has the first-hand knowledge of the facts related to the resolution of the issue(s) grieved.
7. The Grievant may be accompanied by an advisor of his/her choosing who will afford moral support and act as an observer/advisor. The advisor may not participate in the hearing. The Director/Assistant Director should be informed who will be attending by the Grievant, prior to the hearing.
8. The hearing will be confidential and only those persons whose presence determined to be necessary by the committee will be present during the hearing. The Grievant, the Grievant's advisor, if any, and the Respondent may be present throughout the hearing. A witness will be included in the hearing *only* when testifying. No more than one witness will be called to testify at a time. All questioning of a witness will be by the committee, unless the committee decides otherwise.
9. The Grievant will be given reasonable time and opportunity to present the grievance, to rebut adverse evidence and present a closing statement. Similar opportunity will be afforded to the respondent.
10. The hearing procedure should include the following:
 - a. Call to order by the Chair
 - b. Introduction of those present
 - c. Statement of the issues grieved
 - d. Presentation of evidence and testimony in support of the issues grieved
 - e. Questioning of the Grievant's witnesses
 - f. Presentation of evidence and testimony by the Respondent

g. Questioning of the Respondent's witnesses

h. Closing statements

11. The committee will meet in private and provide a brief narrative statement explaining its findings and a summary of the supporting facts. The committee's written decision shall be transmitted to the Director/Associate Dean.
12. The Director/Associate Dean will notify the Grievant and Respondent of the committee's decision and any action to be taken as a result of the committee's finding.
13. The Director/Associate Dean should inform the Grievant of his/her right to appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School in case of an adverse outcome or dissatisfaction. An appeal to the Dean will be limited to the presentation of new, previously unavailable evidence and/or identification of procedural error in the hearing process. The decision of the Dean will be final.

Welcome to UNMC and congratulations on your appointment! This checklist has been prepared to ease your transition into your new position. Although specific departments/units may have additional requirements, in general here's what you'll need to do when you arrive on campus:

Check-in with PI. Your PI will introduce you to the people you'll be working with and help you become familiar with your work area. Your PI may also know of additional steps required by your department.

Check-in with Department Administrator to discuss:

- Payroll paperwork; if a U.S. citizen, bring your (1) Social Security card and (2) passport or drivers license; if an international postdoc, bring your (1) Social Security card or SSN request letter and (2) identifying documents as listed on Form I-9
- Door access and keys
- UNMC Employee number for parking application
- UNMC email address
- Procedure for obtaining a Social Security Number (SSN), if applicable
- UNMC benefits eligibility

- Go to the Student Center to pick up ID card

- Check-in with International Affairs Office if you're an international scholar with a J-1 or H1B visa. The office is located at Be sure to ask about the New International Scholar Orientation

- Parking and Transportation Services to buy your bus pass or parking permit

- If you're an international postdoc, obtain a Social Security number (SSN). Visit the Social Security Administration (SSA) to apply for a SSN only after you've been in the US for at least 10 days. The SSA will give you a letter confirming your request for a SSN. You'll need to show your department administrator this letter to receive your pay

- Open a checking/savings account. Having an account with theCredit Union or one of the many banks in Omaha allows you easy access to your money and simplifies many common transactions (e.g., direct deposit of your paycheck and withdrawals from citywide ATMs)

- Enroll in UNMC benefits. You have 31 days from your date of hire to visit the Benefits Office (Address) to enroll. We *strongly* recommend meeting personally with a benefits representative to ensure you receive all available benefits for you and your family (Set up an appointment by calling Number

- Visit us at the Office of Postdoctoral Studies. We'll give you a welcome packet and ask you to provide your contact information so we can send you important announcements. If you have questions, please email us at postdoc@
- Register your vehicle with the state of Nebraska and obtain a Nebraska driver's license
- Attend New Employee Orientation within a month of your arrival
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training. See